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Chapter xxv of the Report contains a summary of child study in the United States which is also given in the form of brief extracts from the papers in question.

FRANZ BOAS.

*Die Weltanschauung der Naturvölker.* Von L. FROBENIUS. Weimar : 1898. 8°, 427 pp., ill.

Judging from the author's opinion expressed in the introduction to this book, we have here one of the most important contributions to ethnology that has ever been published. Dr Frobenius informs us that he has solved the whole question of the origin of African culture, and that it will be an easy matter for him to discover the origins of American culture. It seems almost cruel to disturb the serene complacency of the author and to subject to a critical review his magnificent assertions, which brush aside previous researches of many "good people" with a majestic sweep of the hand; but it is the painful duty of the reviewer to scrutinize the methods even of Dr Frobenius.

Following the advice of the author, we begin reading his book at the end—like a modern novel. We first find a few remarks regarding the significance of primitive religion which would be quite appropriate in a popular exposition of this subject; but they hardly convey any new idea to ethnologists—and notwithstanding Dr Frobenius' argument, I venture to continue to use the term "primitive religion" as signifying the whole range of transcendental ideas and practices of primitive man. He then asserts that what he calls "animalism," i. e., animal anthropomorphism, is the lowest form of mythology. Ancestor worship, which he calls "manism," is another but later form of primitive religion. The mythology of the heavenly bodies develops from the latter, the setting of moon or sun being the symbols of death. All creation myths are of later origin, being inversions of the myth of death. An inversion is found in the ideas that man after death goes to the sun, and that man descended from the sun; that the body is buried in a box, and that the sun in the beginning came out of a box (page 396 *ff.*). Another law is formulated by Frobenius as the law of "the transformation of motives." Ideas and objects which serve one purpose in one area will assume a new significance when transplanted to a new region. His third law is that of "interpolation"—by which he means that when two ideas in the course of their development become similar in name or in form, one of them tends to be assimilated by the other. This phenomenon has been called by others convergent evolution. Finally, the author enlarges upon the method that he has pursued and wishes to see pursued in researches bearing upon primitive religions.

His fundamental principle is that we are not acquainted with the whole range of ideas (the knowledge) of any given primitive tribe, but that we know only the manifestations of their knowledge. This he considers partly due to lack of clearness of their concepts, partly to the lack of thorough investigation. The first point, according to his ideas, makes it unnecessary to make detailed inquiries into the connection and history of ideas among the people who hold them (page 403). A second principle is applied in the investigation of the historical connection of peoples as proved by their religions. He says (page 404): "The general traits of development from the animalistic to the solar concept of the world are the same the world over. The differences do not lie in the dominant themes, but in secondary ones. Owing to mixture of ideas which are generally connected with migrations, isolated and fragmentary parts of these ideas develop as customs, myths, artifacts, etc., which continue to exist among the tribes which have not produced them, but simply adopted them."

I have searched the book in vain for as much as an attempt to prove these principles and laws. In the very beginning we find the following: The sun-god Maui is identified by very risky etymologies with the word for bird. The boat which often has the shape of a bird carries the souls into Hades. Birds play an important part in the myths referring to the death of Maui. Birds are used in ceremonials accompanying the burial. There are also ceremonies in which birds are used as symbols of life. This proves to the author's mind that the bird which carries away the soul has come to be considered as the bringer of life. Before we accept such an agglomeration of beliefs and customs as proof of this theory, Dr Frobenius must show that these beliefs have sprung from a common source. Similar ethnic phenomena have so frequently developed from distinct psychical sources, that we decline to accept comparisons which are not based on carefully analyzed facts. I think the absurdity of the author's applications of the "law of inversion" that he has so easily found can best be shown by discussing his explanations of the mythology of the North Pacific coast, with which subject I am familiar: A bird throws down a totem pole. According to his theory this means that the bird which carried up the ancestors throws down the carving representing the latter. Here I should object that other totem poles come up in the same way from out of the sea, or were found in the woods. Why is the one brought by a bird more important than the others? Secondly, the carvings on the totem poles are not ancestors, but mostly protecting spirits; and thirdly—what seems to my mind most important—the Kwakiutl copied the custom of erecting totem poles from their northern neighbors and adapted their

traditions to the new customs. The author also considers the connection between raven, sun, and death as proved by the myth telling of the son of a dead woman ascending to the sky, marrying the daughter of the Sun, and of the son of this couple who becomes the raven. The first part of this myth belongs to the long series of miraculous births; and a comparison of other traditions of the same area proves that this is the essential element in the myth. Then, why are those forms of the myth in which the child of the couple is an animal other than a bird less important than the present one? In short, I find everywhere an entirely arbitrary interpretation of selected myths which seem adapted to prove the author's contentions. The few tales that are mentioned as not in agreement with these theories are said to be misunderstood or late distortions of the pure form of the original myth.

By following the methods pursued in the book anything and everything can be proved. It is fiction, not science.

Dr Frobenius is a man of wide reading and of brilliant ideas. There is certainly some truth in his "law of inversion," and a careful study of the history of customs and beliefs from this point of view might lead to valuable results.

FRANZ BOAS.

*The Distribution of the Negritos in the Philippine Islands and Elsewhere.*

By A. B. MEYER. Dresden: 1899. 8°, (viii,) 92 + 2 pp.

This publication is a translation of the author's work on the Negritos of the Philippines (1893) brought up to date. Dr Meyer gives a thorough and critical review of the known facts pertaining to the distribution of the Negrito population on the northern coast of the Indian ocean. He shows that all records except those for the Philippine islands, Malacca, and the Andaman islands are open to doubt. He adheres to his opinion, previously expressed, that Negritos and Papuas, notwithstanding the difference of form of skull, belong to the same race. He points out that certain types of men in India, Ceylon, and Sumatra show affinities with the Negritos, but the difference in the form of hair is, however, so great, that they must not be considered as identical. The tendency of the book is to discourage, on account of lack of sufficient data, generalizations based on the supposed occurrence of Negrito types throughout southern Asia.

FRANZ BOAS.